

Quarterly
NEWS
Letter

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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

BR TO JHN

By Kenneth J. Carpenter

TWENTY YEARS
OF WESTERN BOOK EXHIBITIONS

By Tyrus G. Harmsen

SERENDIPITY
NOTES ON PUBLICATIONS :: EXHIBITIONS
ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP
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The Book Club of California

FOUNDED in 1912, The Book Club of California is a non-profit association of book-lovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing. Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors in the West and to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books.

The Club is limited to seven hundred and fifty members. When vacancies exist membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its aims and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Regular Membership involves no responsibilities beyond payment of the annual dues of \$15.00.* Dues date from the month of the member's election.

Members receive the *Quarterly News-Letter* and all parts of the current Keepsake series, *Gold Rush Steamers*. They have the privilege, but not the obligation, of buying the Club publications which are limited, as a rule, to one copy per member.

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*Excerpt from by-laws of the Club: "... of the total of \$15.00 annual dues... the amount of \$2.00 shall be in consideration for the *Quarterly News-Letter*... and the additional amount of \$3.00 shall be in consideration for the annual keepsakes..." Extra copies of keepsakes or *News-Letters*, when available, are sold to members at 50c each. Membership dues and contributions (including books or documents at current market value, suitable for the Club's library) are deductible in computing income taxes.

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The President's Page

THE equinox has come and gone twice, and man-made satellites (foreign and domestic) have also flashed across our horizons, but the Book Club has passed safely through another year. The Club has serenely maintained its place in its orbit, attending to its business in a way, we hope, to suit the members. In any event the membership still stands at its appointed maximum, and the waiting list, first brought into being during Carl Wheat's presidency, still exists, though valued new members are added month by month.

For members, old and new, the Club has continued its appointed round of activities. First and foremost this means its publications. Of these there were three. In the spring of 1957 there was issued *Mark Twain: San Francisco Correspondent*, edited by Henry Nash Smith, the Literary Editor of the Mark Twain Estate, and Frederick Anderson, Librarian in charge of the Mark Twain Papers at the University of California. This collection of exuberant newspaper sketches written by Mark Twain from San Francisco in 1865 and 1866 to the *Territorial Enterprise* of Virginia City was soon oversubscribed by interested members. In the fall, the Club issued *The Garden of Health*, by Ellen Shaffer,

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Rare Book Librarian of the Free Library of Philadelphia, whose charming and scholarly essay placed in cultural context two famous 15th century herbals and made more meaningful the original leaf from the *Hortus Sanitatis* inserted in every copy. In keeping with the deciduous season, these leaves and the book which introduced them soon disappeared from the stock of new publications. At Christmastime the Publication Committee presented to its members the opportunity to buy a handsome folio, *The Drawings of John Woodhouse Audubon, Illustrating His Adventures Through Mexico and California, 1849-1850*. This work, introduced by Carl S. Dentzel, Director of the Southwest Museum, which houses Audubon's original drawings, was also happily received by members who left but 18 copies to be purchased in this New Year, copies that may already have disappeared by the time this *News-Letter* is printed.

During the year the Club also issued to its members a new series of *Keepsakes*, this one on Early California Resorts, and this one under the skilled editorship of Dr. Shumate actually produced and placed in the hands of the members within a single year. There were also, as usual, four issues of the *News-Letter*, the first two edited by Lewis Allen who in late summer became our European correspondent and turned his post over to Donald C. Biggs. The Club also continued its fine series of exhibits, four of them in honor of printers, Dwiggins and Rogers, regrettably, in memorial exhibitions, and the Grabhorns and Ward Ritchie lively as ever. The most recent, opened in December, happily honored the occasion of the publication by the Institute of Historical Cartography of the first of the five volumes of Carl Wheat's monumental *Mapping of the Transmississippi West*. To inaugurate some of these exhibits our former president, Mrs. John I. Walter, arranged four charming evenings of "open house," enthusiastically attended by many members and guests. During the year the Club library also grew under the careful direction of the Chairman of the Library Committee, David Magee. His article on the nature and the needs of the Library in the Fall, 1957 issue of the *News-Letter* brought forth many valuable gifts which are much appreciated. The collection, old and new, has been made more useful to its members by the many hours that Mr. and Mrs. Ralph J. Hansen have given to its cataloging.

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And so we have come to the end of another year. During this next year the Club will reach its centennial, that is, of publications, for the hundredth volume will be issued at Christmastime, 1958. During this next year the Club will undoubtedly continue to profit from the steadfast interest of its Policy Committee of past presidents, Morgan Gunst, George Harding, Carl I. Wheat, and Mrs. John I. Walter, as it has in these last twelve months. It will continue to profit too, we are sure, from its directors, past and present, as it has always done, but the Board itself will undoubtedly see some change, for just now under the chairmanship of Morgan Gunst, the Nominating Committee is proposing a new slate of directors to take office at the annual meeting on March 25. The achievements of the past are a good augury for the coming year.

JAMES D. HART

BR to JHN

*by Kenneth J. Carpenter **

I*N the John Henry Nash Collection in the Rare Books Department of the General Library, University of California at Berkeley, there is a short series of letters between Nash and Bruce Rogers. Most of the letters, especially those from Nash, are of slight interest, having to do largely with the purchase of a small Albion (obtained by Nash from Braddick's in London with BR's help), an abortive attempt to purchase the original matrices of BR's Centaur, and various requests for samples of BR's work, offers of his own, etcetera. Publishing parts only of a correspondence is often frustrating to the reader, and usually calls for an apology. In this case, partial publication seems justified, for the interest of the correspondence lies almost solely in BR's remarks about his own and other people's work. Nash's letters add little of interest or importance.*

*For the publication of these letters acknowledgments and thanks are due to the Executor of the Bruce Rogers Estate, the Regents of the University of California, and particularly to Kenneth J. Carpenter, Head of the Rare Books Department of the library of the Berkeley campus of the University.

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Each letter chosen is printed in full. A few short business notes from BR are not included.

Although several passages in these letters beg for comment, few need explanation; and to those who know something of the work and personalities of the two men, no comment is really necessary.

16 Clifford's Inn
London E.C. 4
May 4, 1930

My dear Mr. Nash

It was a most pleasant surprise to receive your intimation that you were sending me one of the copies of "The Doves Press"¹ book, as I had expected to content myself with a look at Emery Walker's copy. The book itself arrived only a few days ago, and I send you my sincere thanks for it, and for your kindness in including me amongst its recipients. Knowing as I do so much of the inside history of the Doves Press, from first to last, it is a great pleasure to hear this authoritative account of it at last, with its story of the disposal of the types told fairly and open-mindedly. It was a difficult tale to tell, but it seems to me that Pollard has done it with admirable tact and taste. But then he can be relied upon for just those qualities. I do not find myself wholly in agreement with him when it comes to actual appraisal of the beauties of either the type or the books themselves. But then I am a little weary of both the grand manner and the XV Century style in printing, preferring, in my old age (typographically speaking) something a little more human, and less perfect. The simplicity and restraint of the XV Century book with its (usually) single size of type, were enlivened by an irregularity of both press-work and paper, (as well as dashing initials, and decorations sometimes) which took off the curse and made them human. But when these restrained forms of type-composition are rendered with all the perfection of our modern processes, then I think they become tiresome and affected, and they excite my admiration only as accomplishments in technique, which nowadays, almost any printing-house can produce if it tries. So, with the Doves Press books, I fail to find that Cobden-Sanderson set himself any very difficult problems, and that some that he did set himself were solved pretty badly—at least without much im-

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agination, and certainly without "boldness" (which Pollard attributes to him in the case of a non-turn-over line). His use of red seems to me in most cases very bad, and especially in printing dramatic works.

But all these personal predilections do not lessen one whit my pleasure in your gift. In it you have done a real service to the history of modern printing.

I wonder if it would interest you to know that I am thinking of selling the matrices of the original Centaur type. The fact is that I can no longer afford the luxury of a private type—(or any other luxuries for that matter.) I have never had the skill to turn my talents in book-making (such as they are) into anything much beyond honors and a fair living-wage. And latterly with the death of my daughter and, later, my brother, my financial responsibilities have considerably increased. I came over to England, really, because I could no longer afford to work and live either in or near New York, and because the essentials of life over here are still much less expensive than in the U.S. We had a *furnished* cottage last year, with bath and gas, for \$10 per week for four of us.

It was for this reason I sold the design of the Centaur to the Monotype, on a royalty basis, but its preparation in the many sizes has taken so much longer than I anticipated that not even the most regal royalties will ever repay the time and work I spent on it. For nearly two years now, I have been living on capital, and it will be at least 18 mo. longer before any of the books I am engaged upon will be finished, or bring in any money—if then.

Therefore it has just occurred to me that perhaps the *original* Centaur has a market value—having been so well advertised by my many friends. Any sale of it would have to provide for the agreement I made long ago, to always let Mr. H. W. Kent have whatever quantities he required for his Museum Press cast from the 14 pt. matrices. He has, I believe, only a very limited quantity and has not had any cast up for a long time. I doubt if he will ever require any more of it.

Mr. Rudge owns about 700 lb. which was cast to print the "Champfleury," and which I afterwards turned over to him rather than pay for myself. And I think there is a fount of about 500 lb. of my first casting of it, which I had in England in 1917-19—and which is now stored at Rudge's, with my other special faces.

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These are the only founts outstanding, and little likely to be used to any extent, now that it is obtainable on the Monotype and the cost of hand-setting prohibitive.

I agree with you that the Monotype version is not so good in some ways as the original—but it is because, largely, of the limitations of their methods—even then these are stretched to the utmost, as I stretched them. They must have lost much more on the production of the type than I did—but it was probably not so vitally important to them.

I do not know just how to go about offering my original matrices for sale—probably by a circular announcement sent simultaneously to those I think might be interested, asking for offers for them. I naturally want to get as much as possible for them, but sentiment and association play such a large part in the values of types that it is difficult or impossible to fix a price on it.

As both a printer and a business-man, what would you advise? I suppose I should give Kent the first refusal of it, as he helped me finance its cutting by paying for the right to have larger sizes of caps cut for use at the Museum Press. But I have little thought that his interest in it extends to buying the matrices outright, at this late date.²

Mrs. Rogers has been critically ill for two months, having had to undergo two serious operations. We think she is now over the critical period, but it has been a wearing time. I am writing this at the nursing home where I spend as much time as possible—but the address at the head of the first sheet is my permanent address so long as we stay in England. It is not necessary to send mail through George W. Jones—(though he says he does not mind in the least). He has been most kind to us all in every way.

I must apologize for inflicting so long and so personal a letter upon you—but I fear some others of mine have been very brief and perhaps not appreciative enough of your many generous and handsome gifts. And this has been a long afternoon with nothing to read, so my pen has run on without stopping.

Again with many thanks for the Doves book.

Sincerely yours, Bruce Rogers

Should you be coming to England this summer be sure to look me up at the Clifford's Inn address.

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16 Clifford's Inn, London, E C 4

July 14, 1930

My dear Mr. Nash

I will answer your second letter, first, as it is fresher in my mind.

I do not care just yet to part with my little hand-press, but I have just been round to the place where I bought it (just across from Geo. W. Jones's office) and they furnish[ed] me with the enclosed particulars of the only Albion press they have in stock at present. And this, I fear, will be too large, even if it were unsold by the time your order reached them.

They are dealers in second-hand presses—which they rebuild and recondition and are quite reliable people. They had two small size Albions only a week or so before your letter came, and will have more of them from time to time—so I think the best method would be for you to send on your requirements and they would then fill them at the first opportunity—cabling you when one came in, or taking a definite order for a definite size and pattern. I would also be glad to go around and look it over for you, but I would have to rely upon their word for its condition—as I could tell little by merely looking at it. A press such as mine—platen 7 x 10—for a table—would probably cost not over \$50 or \$60—though the small sizes are more in demand than the larger.

We may possibly be coming back in Sept., but at any time before that date I could act for you. It would however be quite safe to trust to their judgment and honesty.

As to the sale of the original Centaur matrices, I'm afraid, from the paragraph in your letter (in which you say that they are probably less valuable, now that the same name is used for the Monotype series, than they were before) that we can hardly come to any agreement on it. Because my opinion is that since a version of the design is now obtainable by almost any printer, the real *original* is worth just as much or even more, than before. Not, perhaps, to the ordinary printer. I have never thought it of any value whatever to *him*—and for him the Monotype face is quite good enough. But the real *Centaur*, (thanks largely to our mutual friend Henry L. Bullen, who gave it such praise in the beginning and who tried to get the American Type Founders to buy it before they cut the Cloister Roman) might now almost be considered a

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historical type—whatever its merits as a design might be. I still think it would be better to send out a circular letter—but after consultation with Fred Goudy, who is in London at present, and who has probably had more experience in making & selling type-designs, I have decided to fix the price at \$2500. And at that figure I doubt if you will be further interested in it. I suspect that someone like Kittredge, who has a large establishment backing his efforts, would be more likely to consider its purchase—even with the restriction that I think I mentioned in my earlier letter—i. e. that H. W. Kent should have the privilege of having type cast for his Museum Press, if they ever required any more of it. But that, as I said, is a remote contingency, as he now has it on the Monotype.

I shall be obliged if you will let me know your decision as soon as possible, that in case of an adverse reply I can go on with my original scheme of sale.

Your book on the Doves Press continues to meet with praise from all those to whom I show it, and I myself think it one of the best you have ever printed. Two or three collectors here have asked me if copies are still obtainable, but I could only advise them to write to you. You might tell me, when you write.

Sincerely yours, Bruce Rogers

16 Clifford's Inn, London, E.C. 4
Nov. 13, 1930

Dear Mr. Nash

I was away when your letter regarding the small hand-press reached London, and when I returned and went to see Braddick's about it I found that they had stored it away so safely, reserving it until they heard from you, that it had got blocked in behind some very heavy machinery that had come in since. They promised to release it within a few days and thinking that you were in perhaps no great hurry I agreed to wait, rather than have them move a lot of heavy presses, cutters, etc.

I have, however, examined it this morning, and as far as one can tell by mere examination and working it (without actually trying to print anything) it seems to be in excellent condition generally. They will, however, go over it carefully and re-condi-

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tion it before packing. This will require taking it down, as I remember I did my own, but it can be easily put together again and there are easily adjusted bolts to level up the platen, etc. afterwards. It is, I think, exactly the same size over all as my own, but the platen and bed are one size larger. I hope it will please you—but you can at any rate easily sell it again if you don't like it—as there is a great demand for small hand-presses. I used to get an average of two or three letters a year, asking where one could be had.

When—or *if*—the Bible is ever finished I think I will do no more books beyond what I can print on my little press. By limiting them to that I shall not be drawn into these long-lasting jobs, in which I always lose out financially. I have for 25 years kept up the pretence of being able to afford to do only fine work; but at the age of 60, when I find that I'm still helping my wife wash the dishes and do the housework, and buying only the most necessary and cheapest of everything, the sacrifice doesn't seem to be worth the results, any longer.

I imagine there is as much money in making ship-models—which I can do better than printing—and I can then live in some inexpensive quarter of the earth—Italy or the Balearic Islands—and not be tied to *any* great establishment.

I have now got several pages of the Bible into approximately final form, and we have had a set of more or less perfect proofs of them bound into a cover for exhibition at the great Oxford Press show now on, for three months, at Bumpus's. I am having several other sets so done, and one of these I would like to present to The Book Club of Calif.—that is, if they have a fixed place of meeting, or a collection of books on printing. I think, that in view of my ignorance of their actual organisation (although they did me the honor of making me an Honorary Member, I have never received a Club hand-book or list of members—only announcements of their publications, which I have no money to buy.) I think, as I said, I had better send the specimen to you—and if you think there is a place for and an appreciation of such a fragmentary gift at the Club, then you can pass it on to them sometime. If not, then I hope you will keep it yourself. I regret that my allowance of these specimens is so limited that I cannot send two of them.³ But the whole business of the matter is in the Oxford

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Press's hands. I am to have 50 copies of the hand-made paper edition as my fee—and 40 of these I shall bind in 3 vols. and sell as printing or bookmaking, instead of for church use—where a single volume is required.* We haven't made any estimates yet—as composition has only just actually begun—but as near as we can guess, the finer & larger edition will be 200 copies at from \$150 to \$200, in sheets. But that is mere guesswork as the book will not be finished till early (I hope) in 1932.⁴ I have worked, now, just about a year over these preliminary pages—and almost every type in it has been specially made for it—only the caps of the body type and a few of the lower-case letters are the original Monotype cutting of the Centaur—and some of the display types in the larger sizes. There has been no attempts to infuse any “art” into it, beyond the art of type arrangement. And everything is calculated for a Bible to be used in Churches—so its *size* is almost its only merit as typography.

Ever sincerely yours

Bruce Rogers

* It will run to about 1250 pp. and be between 4 & 4½ in. thick.

16 Clifford's Inn
Fleet Street
London, E.C. 4
December 18, 1930

Dear Mr. Nash—

I am very pleased to have your magnificent printing of Henry Bullen's paper on the Nuremburg Chronicle⁵—and it was most kind of you to send it. The 'Chronicle' itself was never one of my own favorites—but then I have a prejudice against almost all German printing—either early or late—with of course, a few notable exceptions. My own taste is more for the French and Italian work. But this peculiarity does not lessen my appreciation of your gift.

Its coming just now throws into most unfavorable contrast my own poor attempts to reciprocate your largeness of giving. Since writing you about the Bible page-specimens I find that the Oxford Press has cut in half the allowance they were to make me of these—and that I am to have only two copies of the sheets in binding, for presentation—and these I had destined for the Grolier Club and the Club of Odd Volumes, of both of which I am an

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honorary member and under many obligations as such. I am therefore limited to single proofs, in various stages and on various papers, for presentation to individual friends—but I have selected the best I could find, which I am sending you under separate cover. They will serve at least to give you an idea of what the book will look like—and the text-pages of “Genesis” are actually printed & on the paper to be used. The others of course are mostly too light on the smoother paper.

It does not matter so much, as you say you have subscribed to the volume itself. I am a little sorry you did not take it direct, either from the Oxford University Press in N.Y.—or from me. I am to have a certain number of copies as my only fee—and most of them must of course be sold. I shall have them either sent out in sheets unbound, or in 3 vols. in temporary but strong covers. A single volume will be $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick and too large except for use in Church—for which the book is designed primarily. Young Mr. Cleverdon has been rather too enterprising I fear—as the book will not appear until 1932—and no one knows how much it will cost or whether booksellers will be allowed a discount. But that matter lies between Cleverdon & the Oxford Press. At any rate there is not much likelihood of the edition being sold out for many years to come—as the Oxford Press want to retain a few copies for ten or fifteen years if possible. They are not likely to print another folio Bible in *this* generation. There is to be another cheaper edition from this same type on thinner paper and much smaller in margins—to retail at £3 or £5 for ordinary church use—though a good many of the “Cathedral” size have already been spoken for, for presentation to different churches & cathedrals.

The Duke of Westminster is having a special lectern designed & made to hold a copy that Lord Balfour was to have given to the Toc. H. Church (the British Legion Church) here in London. Since Balfour died the copy will now be given by the Duke’s architect, who is a friend of mine.

But this letter is getting too long. I must stop and do up various packages. I still have to do all things single-handed and I’m a poor packer and errand boy. I’m losing hope now of ever getting to the point of doing *any* thing in a splendid way—only in the cheapest.

Sincerely yours
B. Rogers

The Book Club of California

Hotel San Rafael
65-67 West 45th St.
New York
March 28, 1935

Dear Mr. Nash

In my haste yesterday I forgot to say that I shall be glad to write my name in your copy of *The Centaur* if you will send it either to Philip Duschnes' office or to the address above (where I live while in New York.)

Yours ever
Bruce Rogers

I must confess I could never see why that particular book aroused so much enthusiasm. Its virtues, in my opinion, are chiefly negative. If the initial and headband which I designed for it could have been used it might have had a touch of originality—but I lost the drawings and wouldn't bother to make them over again.

Philip C. Duschnes
507 Fifth Avenue
New York
March 26 1935

Dear Mr. Nash

It was good to hear from you again after so long an interval. I found our friend Bullen very cheerful and optimistic after a long illness. He is a wonderful chap—as keenly interested in printing as ever. I wish I could say as much myself—but after 40 years of not very much else I confess that I take up a new job, if not with aversion, at least with distaste. The Bible will be the last extensive undertaking I shall go into as I want more time for sailing. I find that sailing in *big* ships is the pleasantest, and also the cheapest, occupation I've ever tried.

I enclose a circular concerning my own copies of the Bible (I took 50 copies instead of a designer's fee and now must sell 40 of them) and will send you in a day or two a copy of the large prospectus which shows several pages of the book. As you will see I have made no attempt to do anything more with it than just a good conventional piece of work, arranged in the normal man-

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ner, and relying upon the size and proportions to give it dignity. There are many things about it I would liked to have different, but I have been absent from Oxford during most of its production and though I have occasionally altered make-up, spacing, etc. by cable, it was not possible to follow it as closely as I would have liked.

I am naturally very much interested in *your* Bible, stray bits of news about it having reached me from time to time. Is it premature to ask if you could send me a specimen page or two?⁶ I would keep them private, if you so desire, but I seldom see anyone to show them to, anyhow. I expect to leave for England about this time next month—to be away perhaps 6 months—in England, Denmark and possibly to go out to Singapore to sail through the East Indies on my friend Alan Villiers' ship, the "Joseph Conrad."

Mr. Duschnes is to act as my agent in distributing my copies of the Bible—so if you know of anyone who is a prospective purchaser please be kind enough to refer them to him. Elmer Adler is mailing out 3000 circulars to 'Colophon' subscribers— but they may not reach everyone interested. Sales are going surprisingly well. With best wishes

Sincerely yours
Bruce Rogers

NOTES

¹ Pollard, Alfred W. *Cobden-Sanderson and the Doves Press*. . . . San Francisco, John Henry Nash, 1929.

² JHN to BR, May 20, 1930: "It is very interesting news to me to learn that you are considering the sale of the 'Centaur' matrices. I have always loved this type. I have had a copy of THE CENTAUR for a number of years, and I take it out and admire the type at frequent intervals. The presswork, to my mind, is not as good as it should be, but the type is a delight to the eye. I have studied it so minutely that when it was recut by the Monotype, every defect was immediately perceptible to me.

"I should like very much to be the owner of these matrices. The value of them, doubtless, has been somewhat decreased by the recutting for the Monotype. I do not know, of course, how much they may be worth, but before you issue a circular letter, I wish you would submit a price to me, as I would like nothing better than to acquire the matrices myself, if possible. I shall be anxious to hear from you about this at your earliest opportunity."

The negotiations came to naught, and in May 1931, Nash released BR from any commitment to let him have the matrices.

³ JHN to BR, November 29, 1930: "I shall be delighted to receive the proof sheets of your Bible, and with your approval, I should like to keep them. The Book Club of California really has no place for such things. . . ."

⁴ It of course was not finished until 1935.

⁵ Bullen, Henry Lewis. *The Nuremburg Chronicle*. San Francisco, The Book Club of California, 1930.

⁶ JHN got no further than the prospectus for his *Bible*, which included specimen pages.

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Twenty Years of Western Book Exhibitions

by Tyrus G. Harmsen*

THE origin of the Rounce & Coffin Club goes back to the Autumn of 1931, when four young men, all enthusiastic about good printing, began meeting informally and soon found themselves more or less spontaneously organized as a club. These founders were Jake Zeitlin, Los Angeles antiquarian bookseller and poet; Gregg Anderson, back in town after a year and a half of printing at the Grabhorn Press; Ward Ritchie, lately returned from Paris where he had worked for François-Louis Schmied; and Grant Dahlstrom, protégé of Bruce McCallister—whom one authority has called Southern California's first fine printer. Actually, it was Arthur M. Ellis, Los Angeles attorney with a flair for printing, who had suggested the idea. He had recently imported from England an Albion handpress which Jake and Grant had set up in his garage and used for their Ampersand Press—an experience that may well have whetted their appetites for closer association with other devotees of hand-printing.

The first meeting of the Rounce & Coffin Club, as recalled by Ward Ritchie, “set the pattern for the subsequent years of the club's history—controversy, heckling, good fellowship, printing, and wine.” In the happy-go-lucky atmosphere of this small club were the seeds of the first *Western Books Exhibition*.

While Grant Dahlstrom was the one who suggested a regional book exhibition, it was Gregg Anderson who became fired with the idea and made the actual plans for the first show. In fact, he was primarily responsible for all of the pre-war exhibitions. His untimely death in France in 1944 was a sad loss to the Rounce & Coffin Club and to American printing. In the commemorative volume, *To Remember Gregg Anderson* (printed for private circulation, 1949), Ward Ritchie declares: “In its way, the Western Book Show is a memorial to Gregg Anderson's devotion to printing and his persistence in fostering it.”

* A Stanford and University of Michigan Library School graduate and a collector of press books, Tyrus Harmsen is in the Manuscript Department of the Huntington Library.

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On March 4, 1939, Gregg mailed a preliminary letter to Western printers and publishers, outlining the idea of an annual exhibition and asking for their opinions. The replies were mostly favorable and a printed leaflet soon followed, containing "a statement of the project together with instructions to contributors & the jury:"

"The Rounce & Coffin Club, an organization of printers and others interested in printing and the making of books, is planning an exhibition of selected Western Books of 1938. Although the first showing will be in the Los Angeles area, one of the main purposes of the exhibit is that it shall be available to all who are interested. Accordingly, the books will be sent on request to qualified sponsors in other cities.

"The exhibition is not meant to compete in any way with other showings of outstanding examples of current book production. It is based on a recognition of the fact that printing in the West has developed under conditions that differ markedly from those existing in other parts of the United States.

"In the West, despite the presence of several large metropolitan areas, there are relatively few publishers of national scope. Consequently, the field of the book printer here is ordinarily much more restricted than that of the eastern printer, and both the number of titles and the quantities printed are on a much smaller scale. We find, too, a high percentage of small printers who do their own publishing. It will be the object of the proposed exhibition to illustrate the best examples of books resulting from our particular set of conditions. . . ."

Western printers and publishers responded nobly to the idea by sending in approximately seventy-five books. Three judges selected thirty-five of them to comprise the first *Western Books Exhibition*. In the Preface to the catalogue, Gregg Anderson commented:

"It is felt that the volumes selected provide a fair representation of successful attempts to produce worthy books under the specific conditions that hold in the trade west of the Rocky Mountains. . . . The inclusion of sumptuous volumes together with inexpensive or utilitarian books is required by the plan of the exhibition. The generous sprinkling of consciously fine books is natural and fitting because such books are responsible for most of the interest in the

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‘western school of printing.’ No exhibition could be truly representative of western book-production that did not give considerable space to the field in which so many of our printers have made their reputations. On the other hand, our progress in the production of trade books is not so well appreciated, and, since it is in this direction that the most significant development may be expected in the future, the inclusion of a large proportion of books that combine relatively low cost with simplicity, honest craftsmanship, and logical, consistent design, is a notable feature of the show.”

The exhibition opened April 26, 1939, in Los Angeles at The Art Center School and subsequently travelled to eleven public, college, and university libraries in California, Oregon, and Washington. In June the books were opportunely shown in the Hall of Fine Printing of the California Building at the Golden Gate International Exposition held at Treasure Island, San Francisco. And so it was that the first Western Books show was launched.

With such an auspicious start, the Rounce & Coffin Club held a similar exhibition in 1940. Twenty-five printers and publishers forwarded seventy-eight books to the club for judging, an indication of their continued favorable reception of the idea. Since 1940 the judges have consisted of one representative each from the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco, the Zamorano Club of Los Angeles, and the Rounce & Coffin Club itself. The number of books to be included in a given show has always been left to the discretion of the judges. Figures reveal that some years the selection seemingly has been made on a more lenient basis than others. This situation is mentioned simply as a reminder that even among qualified judges one must expect to find sincere variations in matters of critical judgment. In 1948, for example, forty-five books were selected out of fifty-two, while in 1950 only thirty-three were chosen from eighty-eight submitted. (Excluding the 1946 show, the average number of books submitted has been sixty-nine, while the average number selected has been forty.) In spite of these fluctuations, each show has always conformed in principle to the original plan of sponsoring an exhibition indicative of the high quality of Western printing and at the same time presenting worthy examples of western publishing.

From 1943 to 1945 there were no exhibitions, but in 1946 a

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retrospective show of wartime books was arranged by the club's then new secretary-treasurer, H. Richard Archer. Fifty-five books were picked from 113 entries. Since 1946 the annual schedule has been resumed. A printed catalogue has been prepared for each show, and a complete file of these forms a valuable record of bookmaking in the western United States for the years covered.

Who were the printers and publishers that brought these books into being? Looking through the sixteen catalogues of Western Books, one finds that although entries have come from all over the West—including such far-flung publishers as the University of Hawaii Press and the University of New Mexico Press—the majority of the books have come from two California centers of printing: the San Francisco Bay area and metropolitan Los Angeles.

San Francisco, of course, has long been a center of fine printing, as one goes back to the early work of John Henry Nash and Taylor & Taylor. Then in 1920 the establishment of the Grabhorn Press brought the creative genius of Edwin and Robert Grabhorn to the City of the Golden Gate, an event which alone would have made San Francisco a prominent spot on anyone's map of American fine printing. Another factor that has favored San Francisco has been the location there of The Book Club of California, which has regularly commissioned several fine books each year for its members. And across the bay at Berkeley, the University of California Press—under the competent hand of the late Samuel T. Farquhar—developed the high levels of design and craftsmanship which have since been maintained in university publications.

The Bay Region has also been the orbit of many small private presses, much of whose earlier work was described by Louise Farrow Barr in her *Presses of Northern California and Their Books* (Berkeley, The Book Arts Club, 1934). In the pre-war Western Books catalogues, for example, one finds the names of the Eucalyptus Press, the Archetype Press, the Black Vine Press, and the Quercus Press. The press of Lewis and Dorothy Allen, in operation since the early 1940's, has been a notable example of the true private press. There are still others which can only be mentioned here, but each one could serve as the subject of a separate article: the Colt Press, Stanford University Press, the press of Lawton Kennedy, the Greenwood Press, and the press of Adrian Wilson.

In Los Angeles there exists a similar hard core of dedicated

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printers and publishers whose work has frequently been included in the *Western Books Exhibitions*. One thinks first of the Ward Ritchie Press, which this year marks its twenty-fifth anniversary. Both as printer and publisher, Ward has made an important contribution to the cultural history of Southern California. The work from this press (the firm name now is Anderson, Ritchie, and Simon) has always been original in design and well printed, and a list of the books privately printed by the Press would make a good starting point for a survey of local writing. Another founder of the Rounce & Coffin Club, Grant Dahlstrom, similarly has maintained a high level of craftsmanship in the printing from his Castle Press. Also at work in the area since the early 1930's has been another Southern California printer of distinction—Saul Marks—who, with his wife, Lillian, has made the name of their Plantin Press synonymous with printing of the finest design and execution. Still other contemporary Los Angeles printers and presses that should be mentioned are Gordon Holmquist of the Cole-Holmquist Press, Richard J. Hoffman of the Los Angeles City College Press, Will Cheney and his Auk Press, Muir Dawson's private press, and the Untide Press of Kemper Nomland and William R. Eshelman. Many of these printers have been commissioned by Glen Dawson in publishing his "Early California Travel Series" and a good number of the small octavos have been selected for inclusion in recent *Western Books Exhibitions*.

Browsing further through the Western Books, one becomes increasingly aware of the large proportion of privately printed books or those which have been issued in very small editions. The inclusion of this type of book has not only enriched each show, but has been essential for depicting the true nature of western printing. In this way many fine or unusual books have been more widely known and enjoyed than would otherwise have been the case. Whether a slim volume of poetry (there are many of these), the history of a business firm, or the special publication of groups such as the Book Arts Club, the Sacramento Book Collectors Club or the Zamorano Club, these volumes have added a greater dimension to the work of western printers.

In a graphic arts exhibition, the subject matter of a book is admittedly of secondary importance, except when one is considering the suitability of a book's design to its contents. Writing

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of the Western Books, however, one simply cannot altogether bypass the tremendous variety of subjects they encompass. Let the following titles speak for themselves: *Joan the Maid of Orleans*; *The Tetons*; *Robinson Jeffers*; *Cowboy Dances*; *Cacti for the Amateur*; *Gold Rush Song Book*; *The Epicure in Imperial Russia*; *The Shakespeare Documents*; *God's Barn* [a short story]; *Alchemy as a Way of Salvation*; *Bicycle Polo*; *The Zamorano Eighty*; *A Yanqui in Patagonia*; *Paul Verlaine*; *Native Arts of the Pacific Northwest*; *The Nuremberg Chronicle*; *Seeing the Elephant*; *Han Tomb Art of West China*; *Four Ghost Stories*; *California's Utopian Colonies*; *Snow-Shoe Thompson*; *Arguments for Inconciseness*; *Catnachery*; *Electronic Motion Pictures*; and *Pheasants for Peasants*.

Other members of the R & C would no doubt have presented this account along different lines. It seems certain, however, that none would deny the conclusion that the founders of the *Western Books Exhibitions* acted with wisdom and foresight, and that throughout the years there has been a remarkable adherence to the original plan. Whatever good these annual shows have achieved for the advancement of the book arts is due to the initiative of those who originated them; to the many printers and publishers who have so generously contributed their work; to the members of the Rounce & Coffin Club who have handled the arrangements each year; and finally to the support provided by the many libraries throughout the West whose cooperation has given the Western Books the public display they deserve and enjoy.

Exhibition Notes

FOR THE SECOND YEAR, the Club plays host to the Seventeenth Annual Western Book Exhibition of 1958 sponsored by the Rounce & Coffin Club of Los Angeles. The Club takes pride in the selection of *all* of its publications for the year: *The Drawings of John Woodhouse Audubon*, *The Garden of Health* and *Mark Twain: San Francisco Correspondent*.

A special preview for members and their friends was given on the evening of March 3. The two largest exhibitors were Lawton Kennedy with 10 books and Ward Ritchie with 7. Only two books were rated as "excellent," as opposed to four last year. These were the Carl Wheat *Mapping of the Transmississippi West*, printed by the Grabhorns, and Adrian Wilson's *Printing for Theatre*.

The judges were: Muir Dawson, representing the Rounce & Coffin Club, Robert J. Woods, representing the Zamorano Club, and our own Dr. Albert Shumate, representing the Roxburghe Club. Catalogues may be had for twenty-

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five cents by writing Lyle H. Wright, care of the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino 9, California.

Following this show, the Club will inaugurate its "Treasures" series with a showing of *The Treasures of the Book Club of California*. This will be followed with a showing of the "Treasures" from various public and private repositories of the Bay Area and we hope to continue these showings with selections from the collections of members.

Notes on Publications

THE CLUB'S SPRING BOOK will be a reprint, in facsimile, of the "Estracto de Noticias," printed in Mexico in 1770, which contained the first news received there of the occupation of Monterey Bay, the capital and center of Spain's hold on the Pacific Coast. The "Estracto" is accompanied by an English translation, by a short narrative of how and why Spain took possession of California at a time when her colonial empire was about to go to pieces, and by two extraordinary maps. Altogether, the Publications Committee believes this will be a choice item for connoisseurs of Californiana—and the dish will be made attractive by being priced under \$15.

California was occupied by the Gaspar de Portolá expeditions of 1769 and 1770. The prime object was to establish a Spanish post on Monterey Bay, which had been explored and publicized by Sebastián Vizcaíno in 1602-1603. According to the reports of his expedition, it was the most promising site where Spanish ships could seek refuge from pirates or obtain fresh water and supplies after their long voyage from the Philippine Islands. Since no explorer had gone back to re-examine the bay in the following century and a half, publicists and enthusiasts built up its fame by retelling their own stories, without ever being contradicted. As a result, Spanish mariners came to look upon it as an answer to a shipwrecked sailor's prayer, a safe haven from where they could continue their search for the Strait of Anian and other wonders of the North Pacific.

Even though Monterey Bay seemed so promising, no move was made to occupy it till José de Gálvez became Visitor General of New Spain in 1765. This dynamic man, entrusted by King Charles III and his ministers with a complete reform of Mexico's administrative system, not only carried out these duties with daring and brilliance, but also determined to settle Upper California. A decision to undertake such a vast and expensive project was made easier by the fact that in 1768, when he was on the point of doing so anyway, he received from the Foreign Office in Spain new reports of Russian activities in the North Pacific. It was reported, in fact, that many Russians had been killed in skirmishes with the Indians, from which it could be inferred that they had actually settled there. If so, they might then be very near to the famous port of Monterey, and might even be the first to take formal possession of it. This threat fitted in with Gálvez's own plans; he was ambitious to become another conqueror, like Cortés or other heroes of old. He seized the opportunity, ordered the governor of Baja California, Don Gaspar de Portolá, to head the project himself, enlisted the aid and cooperation of the Franciscan missionaries whose president,

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Father Junípero Serra, drew upon the missions of Baja California without stint for cattle, horses, and provisions, as well as for personnel.

Drawing freely also on the resources of the mainland, Gálvez organized and sent out the double-barrelled expeditions, by sea and land, which founded San Diego, Monterey (their real objective), and discovered San Francisco Bay, an extraordinary puzzle to them. Immediately after the founding of the mission and presidio of San Carlos on Monterey Bay, reports of their success were rushed to Mexico. One set of dispatches was carried by two men who made the trip to Lower California by land. The other reports were taken by Portolá and Costansó on the ship *San Antonio* to the Port of San Blas. Though they had left three weeks later, they got in first. Couriers carried their dispatches to Mexico City, and the Viceroy, elated over the successful outcome of Gálvez's plans, declared a public celebration, including the printing of the good news. This was the "Estracto de Noticias . . .," an Abstract or Summary of the news just received from Upper California, which is now offered to members of the Club in a new format. The book, his first for The Book Club, is designed by Jim Robertson.

Elected to Membership

The following have been elected to membership since the Winter issue of the News-Letter:

<i>Member</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>
George W. Campbell	San Francisco	Richard H. Voegeli
William Coats	Hillsborough	Miss Marjorie Freeman
Mrs. Richard Y. Dakin	Belvedere	W. W. Robinson
Mr. and Mrs. Dawson Dean	Berkeley	Marshall B. Tucker
Glenn Dumke	San Francisco	W. W. Robinson
C. B. Favour	Palo Alto	B. F. Schlesinger
Alan H. Fleishhacker	Atherton	Martin S. Mitau
Jaquelin S. Holliday	Pasadena	George L. Harding
Arne Ingels	San Francisco	A. R. Kilgore
Charles Klor	San Francisco	Oscar Lewis
Wm. H. MacDonald	Boston, Massachusetts	Mrs. Elizabeth Downs
Harvey Parker	Glendale	Jake Zeitlin
Patrick H. Peabody	San Jose	H. E. Linden
Paul Speer	Santa Rosa	Robert Haines
Miss Sarah K. Vann	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	Miss Edith M. Coulter
Chapin Library	Williamstown, Mass.	J. Terry Bender

Annual Meeting

THE ANNUAL MEETING of The Book Club of California will be held at the Club Rooms, 545 Sutter Street, San Francisco, on Tuesday, March 25, at 11:30 a.m.

ELIZABETH DOWNS, *Secretary*

Printed at the Grabhorn Press

ANNOUNCEMENT—NEW LOCATION

BEGINNING OUR THIRD YEAR
NEW SHOWROOMS BETWEEN POLK AND VAN NESS
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